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'Jolly Green Giant's' JFK Probe Triggered In '66 Chat With Long

Second In A Series

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NEW ORLEANS, La.—How and why did Earling Carothers Garrison (who much prefers "Jim"), the district attorney of

pre.e Court, which upheld the right of one public official to criticize others).

Garrison is colorful, outspoken, brutally candid and highly articulate. He is also a swinger —and he is popular.

Garrison has parlayed his political muscle, his intriguing crusade against as-yet faceless assassins and his ambition into a position of fearsome power in one-party Louisiana.

After Garrison arrested Clay L. Shaw, prominent New Orleans businessman, and charged him with conspiring to murder President Kennedy, Louisiana's Gov. John J. McKeithen was asked if he had any criticism of Garrison.

"No," McKeithen said, "and if I did, I wouldn't voice it. I have learned that most of Jim Garrison's enemies are buried." He added that he meant "in a political sense."

Garrison's detractors claim that he is intimidating the mag-

istrates (who are elected) and controls the grand jury that is selected by rotating presiding judges.

The district attorney's friends reply that Garrison, early in his first term after election in 1962, was able to reduce B-girl drinking, prostitution and other out-of-control crime in New Orleans'

famed French Quarter only by forcing the judges to give him money to run the crackdown.

Next: While Jim Garrison is toiling to spring a "miracle" in the assassination case, attention is being focused on his personality and his record as chief law enforcement officer of Orleans Parish.

Orleans Parish, become the only law enforcement officer now trying to disprove the Warren Commission's findings on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Garrison himself says skepticism about the report was trig-

gered in the fall of 1966, during a plane ride to New York with Sen. Russell B. Long, Louisiana Democrat. Long, Garrison said, had some doubts about Kennedy's assassination.

Returning to New Orleans, Garrison dipped into what he called some "interesting articles and books criticizing the Warren Report."

The Warren Report was published Sept. 27, 1964. It named Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone assassin.

Articles by Mark Lane, Vincent Salandria, Leo Sauvage and Joachim Joesten, severely criticizing the report, apparently convinced many readers that the Warren findings were incomplete at best, phony at worst. Gallup Poll and Harris Survey studies have found doubt among a high percentage of the American people that the Warren Commission had "told the full story."

The public's doubts leaped af-

ter Jim Garrison had startled the country and the world with his announcement that he had discovered a "plot" to assassinate Kennedy; that the conspirators were "known;" that he would bring about their arrest and conviction.

Garrison's interest in the Kennedy assassination seems to have coincided, then, with the appearance of a number of books insinuating or asserting that President Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy that had been deliberately swept under the rug by the CIA and "covered up" by the chief justice of the United States, Earl Warren.

The political environment in Louisiana and local conditions and customs in Orleans Parish provided a logical background for a conspiracy and an ex post facto exploitation of it.

Of the several thousand exiles from Castro's Cuba who had fled to New Orleans, there were many who had been embittered by what they considered to be Kennedy's "broken promises" to help them regain their homes in Cuba.

There was and remains a strong "anti-Washington" feeling in Louisiana.

These were the circumstances, then, in which Big Jim Garrison (known in New Orleans as the "Jolly Green Giant") could "discover" or "conceive" a five-year old conspiracy to kill a president.

Garrison himself would find either the proof and prosecution of a conspiracy or the authorship of it fascinating.

He is a voluble, imaginative and well-read man.

He likes to write. During his trial for defaming eight Orleans Parish Criminal Court judges, Garrison displayed his contempt for the proceedings by writing a play, in Shakespearian style, while being tried.